

Remarks/Arguments:

Claims 14-27 are pending in the application.

Claim Rejections

In rejecting claim 14, the Office Action contends that sleeve (14) in Obersteiner et al. is "a bowl-shaped stop fixedly secured in a housing step inside the valve housing." The Office Action cites the description in column 4, lines 2-5 and Fig. 2 of Obersteiner et al. as support. This contention is not supported by substantial evidence on the record, and in fact is contradicted by the evidence.

Sleeve (14) in Obersteiner et al. is not "fixedly secured" in a housing step. It is movable in the axial direction. The cited passage in column 4, lines 2-5 states "[t]he sleeve 14 **is guided** at least partially along a wall of the bore in the valve housing 9 and is simultaneously positioned in abutment on a small housing step." (Col. 4, lines 2-5) (emphasis added). This passage is the only passage that sheds light on whether sleeve (14) can move. The phrase "is guided" confirms that it does move. If sleeve (14) can move, it is not "fixedly secured" in the housing step.

The cited passage also states that sleeve (14) "is simultaneously positioned in abutment on the housing step." Sleeve (14) abuts the housing step, nothing more. Although sleeve (14) may be stationary at times on the housing step, it is not "fixedly secured" in the housing step. Such a conclusion would disregard the first part of the cited passage, which indicates that sleeve (14) moves. By analogy, a movable piece of furniture that abuts a wall is stationary, but is not "fixedly secured" in the wall.

The Office Action could be implying that a movable object is "fixedly secured" if it abuts something. Such an interpretation is inconsistent with the broadest reasonable interpretation of the phrase "fixedly secured". The American Heritage® Dictionary defines "fixed" as "[f]irmly in position; stationary." *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. Retrieved June 7, 2007, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/fixedly>. "Secured" is defined as "[t]o capture or confine." *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. Retrieved June 7, 2007, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/secured>. A movable or "guided" sleeve does not fit within these definitions.

If "fixedly secured" is interpreted to cover movable objects, then the Office Action is ignoring the "fixedly secured" limitation in claim 14. A "bowl-shaped stop *fixedly secured* in a housing step" is no different from a "bowl-shaped stop in a housing step" under such a construction. The Patent Office can not ignore express limitations in a claim. See *Perkin-Elmer Corp. v. Westinghouse Elec. Corp.*, 822 F.2d 1528, 1532, 3 USPQ2d 1321, 1324 (Fed. Cir. 1987).

For all of the foregoing reasons, Obersteiner et al. does not disclose "a bowl-shaped stop *fixedly secured* in a housing step inside the valve housing." Obersteiner et al. is the only reference that is cited for this limitation in the § 102 and § 103 rejections. Because this feature is not shown in Obersteiner et al., Applicant submits that claim 14 is allowable. Withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

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Claims 15-27 are dependent on claim 14 and incorporate all the features recited in claim 14. Therefore, claims 15-27 are believed to be allowable over the references of record for at least the same reason that claim 14 is allowable. Withdrawal of all claim rejections is therefore respectfully requested.

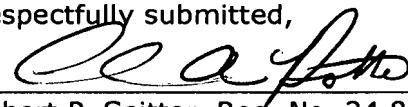
Specification

Applicant appreciates the examiner's attention to the informalities noted in the specification. Appropriate amendments have been made to resolve these informalities.

Conclusion

Applicant believes that the application is in condition for allowance and requests reconsideration of the final office action.

Respectfully submitted,



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June 11, 2007

